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ESSAYS

AND

REFLECTIONS,

RELIGIOUS AND MORAL.

Σπουδασω δὲ καὶ ἐκάστοτε ἔκειν ὑμᾶς μετὰ
τὴν ἐμὴν ἔξοδον, τὴν τούτων μνήμην ποιῆσθαι.

St. Pet. ii. 1, 15.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE following little Essays, if they may assume such a Title, were drawn up, as they occurred to the Father of a pretty numerous Family, wholly and solely for their inspection, when he shall be no more, persuaded, that the opinions and precepts of a Parent, may possibly have some additional weight with those who would naturally be convinced of the design of him who gave them.

The

The Trouble of transcribing prevailed on him to print them, and should they chance to fall into the hands of any other young People, for to such only they apply, and induce an attention to serious and important Considerations, the whole aim of this Mite, thrown into the Stock of religious and moral Instruction will be fully answered.

There are added a few Thoughts on similar topics—neither the one or the other claim any further merit than their Intention—little can be advanced on such subjects that may not have been often, and consequently better said before; but if somewhat worth reflecting on, not, in early life at least, looked

looked for in larger Volumes, met with here in a very limited compass, should incite in youth (the prime season for good impressions) a wish for better Information, and more particularly a search into the holy Scriptures, a very desirable point would be gained; for it confidently may be asserted, that none ever devoted a portion of their time and thoughts, with candid and well regulated minds, to those sacred records, without a thorough conviction, that they contain the words of eternal life.



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 ERRATA.

Page 3, Line 18, read completely.

9,	Note, <i>Λυπεῖσθαι</i>
33,	4, dele <i>and</i> .
38,	17, implied.
46,	8, honestly.
63,	7, dele <i>an</i> .
92,	16, for <i>they</i> read <i>we</i> .
151,	14, <i>Κρεῖλλον</i> .

A PROPER OBSERVANCE OF

SUNDAY.

THE remark of a wise man on the good effects of a religious observance of Sunday, may in an high degree be asfented to by the experience of many; but let not its failure, in the fenfe by him suggested, be a discouragement to a confcientious difcharge of the duties of that day, though not invariably attended with all the temporal advantages, there fupposed to be annexed to it.

We all fee the immediate profperity of the wicked, and the loffes and accidents the good and the virtuous are often liable to: why it fo happens, is not for

B

us

us to inquire, but humbly resign ourselves to the will of that all-ruling Providence, the wisdom of whose dispensations is to us unsearchable. This I may venture to assert, that whoever spends Sunday in a proper manner, will gain more than that amiable writer surmises—he will preserve his mind, during the succeeding week, whatever may befall him from the accidents of this life, as to his worldly circumstances, in a temper, not to be too much elated by prosperity, or depressed by adversity; and better secured against the temptations that continually beset us.

One observation I may make, convinced of its utility and truth by long experience; that we shall in general, perform our duty *in Church*, in a great measure,

measure, well or ill, in proportion to the thoughtless or serious manner, in which we have, by our private devotions at home, prepared our minds for the public attendance on it.

It certainly would be improper, for various reasons, were the sermon to precede the prayers, though possibly productive of some advantages the influence a well-ordered discourse might have, on the subsequent performance of that duty; but in aid to it, let me give this advice to my dear children, for whose use, and I trust in God, profit, I occasionally set down such casual thoughts, as now and then occur—always to rise on a Sunday morning, at such an hour, as may compleatly supersede and preclude all hurry and confusion

sion in dressing and going to church, *in good time*, and that will allow half an hour, or more, to read and seriously reflect on, some well-written discourse, on a moral or religious subject, abundance of which are to be met with, in the works of our English divines: this practice will inevitably have a good effect, in disposing the mind, and preparing it for a ^a decent behaviour, where so many go, without due consideration of the sacredness of the duty, and are so far from

^a To a proper behaviour in church, it may seem, though it really be not trifling, to add, the necessity of propriety, even in dress; but such there assuredly is, on this occasion. Decency in that article should be observed, relative to our station in life, distinct from being slovenly; yet surely it is indecent to approach our Maker, with the fluttering, affected and feathery ornaments we sometimes are disgusted with, calculated to attract the attention of others, and without much uncharitableness, we may presume, engross no small share of their own. St. Paul, at least, was of this opinion, and probably would not have changed it, had he seen some of our modern habiliments. Tim. i. c. 2, 9,

from benefiting by their attendance there, that they draw down judgments on themselves, instead of blessings.

Believe this on the authority and experience of a parent, whose most earnest prayer it is, that by doing our duty here, we may be inseparately united in happiness hereafter, through the mercy of our Creator and the mediation of our Redeemer.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF
TIME.

ONE of the first and most important points a young person should attend to, is the great value of time: a custom of early rising is replete with so many advantages both to body and mind; that those parents are highly blamable, who do not, all they are able, unremittingly habituate their children to the practice of it. Their next object is a particular attention to guard against an habit of lounging, than which nothing but intemperance, more weakens the powers of the human frame, as much enfeebled from want of application, as the limbs are from the want of exercise.

Were

Were we to attend to the many days of our short existence we have thrown away, not even in amusements, but literally speaking, in doing nothing, either good or bad, we should be shocked at the computation, and be sensible, our time would not only have passed happier and lighter over, but that we might have attained much useful knowledge in those hours which have hung so heavy on our hands—hence we see many people languid and miserable who are so unfortunately circumstanced as to have nothing to do; and the superior spirits and vivacity of such, as are generally employed. The ^b former pursue their

^b *Λυπῆται ἀπολογχάνων καὶ ἐπιθυμιῶν—*

“He is made unhappy by unattainable pursuits and desires,” was said of a man of pleasure of former times, and applies to the same character now.

their round of pleasure, with a lack-lustre-eye; while the latter feel the enjoyment of a short respite from their studies or avocations, with alacrity and chearfulness—so it is with those who fare sumptuously every day; they view the dainties set before them with palled and jaded appetites, while he whose common food is plain and wholesome, enjoys an accidental superfluity with true relish. Thus we see the good things of this life, are much more equally divided than at first sight appears.

But to return to the particular subject of this paper; it has been recommended by sensible people, that we should never be without a book at hand, to recur to in the various portions of our time, which are necessarily unfilled up by any particular

particular occupations; these are many in most situations of life; it is astonishing how much a man, almost ever so deeply and busily engaged in the transactions of the world, might acquire by such a custom persevered in. If to this you add an habit of reflection, much more indeed may be acquired: he who thinks most, may read least, and yet gain superior knowledge.

To these inducements for our merely temporal improvement or amusement, we may superadd the best of all motives, religion: our time is not our own to throw away; it is given us by God Almighty to be used for his good purposes, and is one of those talents committed to our charge, for which we shall be accountable, if we put it to no good use,
even

even though we do not absolutely abuse it—" Teach us, therefore, O Lord, so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom!"

MIRACLES.

MIRACLES.

IF the miracles said to have been wrought when the Gospel was first dispensed, in confirmation of its divine authority, be disbelieved, we are under the necessity of believing a much greater miracle to have been accomplished, than any recorded in sacred writ, namely, the wonderful and rapid progress, it made in the space of so few years, through almost every part of the then known world, the historical evidence of which, cannot be contradicted, by the most determined infidel.—Nothing but the all-powerful hand of Providence could have thus propagated a religion, preached by obscure and illiterate people; opposed by the great
and

and the powerful ; opposing the general established modes of thinking ; and so far from promising any temporal advantages to its professors, they were taught, and often obliged to relinquish them all, together with their lives, in defence of it.

Enthusiasm which in subsequent ages, has so visibly operated, could then have had no share in producing such effects, as nothing of the kind appears in its whole history ; and all the precepts of Christianity are clearly exempt from any suspicion of that passion, so apt to mislead mankind. If to these considerations, you add the astonishing completion of the Prophecies of both the old and new Testament, and the dispersion of the Jews, which exists to this time,
it

it is morally impossible to refuse our assent to the Religion of Christ, on any principles of common sense, even exclusive of duty.

Had not the Church of Rome and other pretenders to miracles been so perpetually detected of Falsehood, no cavils would ever have prevailed against those recorded in holy writ.—No comparison can be drawn between them.—The latter were done openly, so as to preclude all doubt; not with any interested view, for nothing of that kind appears; but solely in confirmation of the divine authority of the most divine system of morals ever promulged; nor were they ever attempted to be contradicted *at* the time they were wrought —The only objection *then* made, was,
that

that the assistance of evil spirits was called in to perform them. That objection our Saviour fully answered.

All Pagan and Popish miracles have been pretended to, on grounds totally different; to obtain pecuniary emoluments, or to exalt one sect or order superior to others: evident marks of interest or priest-craft have ever attended them, and consequent ridicule even with sensible people of their own persuasion.

DOUBT

DOUBT IMPLYING EVIDENCE.

DOUBT implies evidence, to a certain degree—Whoever therefore only *doubts* of the truth of Christianity, is as much necessitated to live up to its precepts as the most implicit believer. We are obliged to act in this manner, in all the common concerns of life. No man who ventures his fortune in trade, or his life on the sea, can be assured of success in the one, or of safety in the other—The stake in this life is infinitely less than in the next.

It has been deemed by some, that it is wrong to let young people know, that there *are* difficulties in the apparent dispensations of Providence. I cannot think

think so; because if they ever come to consider these subjects, they may either occur to their own minds, be met with in books, or heard in conversation; they should therefore be early taught to expect them, by which means, they will be on their guard, not to be surprized into infidelity, when they are apprized what weapons they have to contend against, and with what kind of armour they should defend their faith, and be able to give a reason for the Religion they profess.

That a Revelation should contain difficulties, which we have not faculties to comprehend, is no more than what we daily experience in every operation of nature—We may therefore as well deny the existence of the works of nature in
contradiction

contradiction to our senses.—The only question to be asked, and the only matter to be proved, is, what evidence we have, that the Scriptures are the real deposits of the word and the will of God.—If that cannot be ^c disproved, we are necessarily obliged to receive them, *as such*, however the sublime and mysterious subjects they treat of, may exceed the limits of our finite understandings: arguing in this manner by no means debases reason, which is the only faculty we have to judge of every thing, even of Revelation itself; for did it contain evident immoralities or clear contradictions, that would be an internal

^c What none can prove a Forgery, may be true,
 What none but bad men wish exploded, must.

Cooper's Task. B. 5.

nal proof of its falacy—We may safely
rest the foundation of our faith on this
internal evidence.

THE

THE PASSIONS.

THE seeming difference between the precepts of Christianity, and the transactions of the World, may easily be reconciled and made subservient to each other, and is so far from forming an objection to the Gospel, that it gives an additional weight to, and evidence of its veracity—All the passions implanted by Providence, are, under the dictates of reason and religion, equally conducive to the happiness of this life, as of the next: a proper degree of pride will restrain us from doing any thing unworthy of our rank; ambition, and the desire of present honour, and future fame, incite us to actions truly laudable, and consequently virtuous—The pursuit

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of wealth to supply necessities and conveniencies for ourselves and families, so far from being inimical to religion, is productive of industry, and of course of virtue; nor can it be supposed that our Saviour's admonition of not caring for the morrow, was meant to encourage sloth, idleness and extravagance; but only too immoderate and anxious a concern for the things of this World. The same assertion may be fairly made, and the same conclusion as fairly deduced, through the whole range of human passions. Lust, Revenge, Cruelty, Avarice and Intemperance, are vices and not passions; not therefore necessary for carrying on the business or the amusements of life, and are as much prohibited by natural uncorrupted reason, as by the obligations of religion.

CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY.

CHRISTIANITY is the only true philosophy, because it is the only sure guide, that can shew a man what he was, what he is, and what he ought to be: what Cudworth calls, “Eternal and immutable morality”—It dispels the clouds with which a false philosophy has attempted to obscure and render dubious the truths which connect man with his Creator, virtue with happiness.

After all our endeavours, we can expect to obtain but a very imperfect knowledge of the wisdom of God, in the redemption of mankind; it was not intended by the author of our being, to give us clear and full information on the

subject ; he has designedly thrown a veil over his own works, both of nature and grace ; and it hath pleased him, no doubt for wise and good purposes, to reveal to us in *part* only. It is our duty to improve every dispensation of his Providence to our advancement in piety and virtue: if we do this we are sure to comply with the intenions of our Creator.

How immediately and necessarily a disbelief of the existence of the soul after death, leads to Atheism, or a total disbelief of God, and his agency, hence appears; that should the soul after its separation, from the body, remain inanimate, no rational account can be given of God's Providence, his justice, love of virtue and hatred of vice; the
good

good often suffering in this life, and the bad enjoying every earthly happiness—
Take away the idea of future rewards and punishments, and God will cease to be God, or that just and perfect Being every object in nature convinces us he is.

ALL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD, DERIVED
FROM

REVELATION.

WHOEVER object to Revelation, should ask themselves this question; what knowledge we should now have of the true God, had it not been *for* Revelation?

In the 4000 years previous to the publication of the Gospel, mankind had attained to as high degrees of human wisdom, as they have since acquired; arts, and sciences were carried to the utmost perfection—The poets, philosophers and historians, of those ages, have never been excelled; possibly not equalled:

led: the mechanic, liberal and polite arts had been cultivated to a degree, that we now view their remains, with astonishment. An Aristotle, a Plato, and a Tully had published their immortal writings, but the world remained still in ignorance, and professedly sacrificed "to the unknown God." The Gospel therefore alone dispelled this darkness, without which, we should at this day have adored the Idols and Deities of the Pagans; for such we know are still the Divinities of those countries, where its light has not yet shone forth.

The Persians are perhaps the only people, among whom, without the light of Revelation, a knowledge of the one true God has prevailed: this is
said

said to have been derived to them from Abraham—We may therefore presume, God will, in due time, bring them within the pale of the Christian church—the Mahometans call them, and Christians, with like contempt, Infidels.

There can scarcely be a stronger argument, nor certainly need one, in support of Revelation, which whoever objects to, should consider, that without it, with all their wisdom, they must inevitably, have remained in utter ignorance of God Almighty, his attributes and wonderful dispensations. By a Revelation *only* the true God was made known to the Jews—They corrupted this knowledge and repeatedly became Idolaters. By the Gospel *alone*, he is discovered to the rest of the world;
and

and not only discovered, but the knowledge of him diffused abroad, in a manner we have every reason to think, would not otherwise have been brought about; for however sublimely ^d the philosophers of antiquity reasoned on the subject, their reasonings were confined to their schools and sects, nor calculated to be dispersed, or understood by the generality of mankind.

^d Some of the disciples of Socrates clearly saw and declared, that a Revelation was necessary to obtain a true notion of God, and the worship due to him.

FAITH AND INFIDELITY

COMPARED IN THEIR EFFECTS.

A powerful argument in defence of Revelation may be taken from these considerations.—Was it ever known, by the experience of any individual now existing, or has it ever been delivered down to us in the annals of mankind, that any one, whose life had been conformable to the precepts of the Christian Religion, and whose faith had been steadfast in the belief of its divine Author, had ever been, in the hour of death, disturbed or distressed on *that account*? On the contrary, innumerable are the instances, where *these considerations* have afforded the highest consolation,

tion, at the awful period, when the soul, not unfrequently, seems to have a clearer insight into futurity, when disengaging itself from the body—Take the other side of the question in behalf of infidelity, and what terrible effects has it produced, when the passions, self-opinion and pride, cease to operate?

The most professed unbelievers cannot deny the excellency of the precepts, delivered in the holy Scriptures, supposing them calculated *only*, for the good of society, exclusive of a future existence—Let two men, both equally virtuous, and leading their lives in exact conformity to the rules prescribed to us in the Gospel, one of them for the pure sake of virtue alone, and the other for the sake of virtue, with the additional

tional reflection, that he is at the same time doing, not only what is right and pleasing to God Almighty, but absolutely enjoined by his express word and command, and what must be the result when they both come to die? The Infidel expires in doubt and perplexity, only expecting if he continues consistent to his own principles, a dreary annihilation. The Christian, full of hope, and confidence, that by adding a firm faith to good works, he is going to reap that reward, he has been taught to expect: faith can never be imputed to him as a crime, when he has built it on such unquestionable authority; what the want of it, when so enforced, may occasion, is not for us to presume. The great searcher of hearts is all gracious and all merciful, to whose wise dispensations

fations all must submit—The fair conclusion is, that the *one cannot* be punished, unless we deny every attribute of God, and even his very existence, the other may; and let us pray God they may not.

ANTICIPATION.

ANTICIPATION.

THE misery of life is the common theme of declamation throughout all ranks, and in all times: that life is chequered with casualties and misfortunes, which happen, in a certain proportion, to all the sons of men, cannot be denied, and which without doubt, are either inflicted or permitted by the all-wise disposer of events, to wean us from a world we might otherwise be too fond of, and induce us to set our affections, on a better; but still it is in every man's power, to be happy to a certain degree, and that perhaps the most consummate that our nature is capable of, because out of the reach of fortune or accident.

accident. True virtue, unfeigned piety and religious faith, will afford this only stable comfort.

In the higher orders, ambition and luxury; in the middle ranks, folly and dissipation; and in the lower, idleness and debauchery, more or less, lead to ruin, and imbitter the passage through life, which would otherwise glide on much easier and less disturbed.

The honest, the frugal and the temperate man runs few risks of being eminently unhappy; cannot possibly be completely so, and at all events, has internal resources to palliate misfortunes that may be unavoidable; such as the opposite characters, however they may

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have

have short and transient gleams of what they may deem superlative pleasures, can have no pretensions to.

Diseases, and frequently premature death, are the usual consequences of Intemperance of every kind—The instances, where these effects do not speedily follow, are rare; but granting a constitution so strongly framed, as to bear them unimpaired, for a long series of years, yet it is not in humanity to exist beyond a very limited period. What folly then is it, while we are young, not to look forward to that state, to which every moment brings us nearer, and to consider what will be our reflections, when age approaches, as surely approach it will with a quick pace; could we in proper colours, paint
to

to our imaginations the old debauchee worn out by the infirmities his vices have brought on him; the villain who may have raised a princely fortune by rapine and dishonesty; the selfish miser who has accumulated wealth by never attending to the wants and feelings of his fellow creatures, or the infidel who scoffs at religion, in their dying moments, and contrast them with the calm, resigned and even joyful sensations, a good man, in the true sense of the word, then experiences; and one would think it morally impossible, that the utmost levity and inconsiderateness, could permit us not to *anticipate* the misery of the one, or the happiness of the other! And may God Almighty grant his grace to us all, so to live, that when we come to die, we may be

ready to exclaim, " O Grave where *is*
thy victory, O Death where is thy
thing!"

UNITARLANISM.

UNITARIANISM.

THE doctrine of Unitarianism, now propagated with much industry, and by various modes, may be fairly obviated by one simple argument, without entering into any metaphysical reasonings.

If you believe the holy scriptures to be the word of God, (and unless that be granted, there is an end of the dispute, and of all the conclusions that can be drawn from thence) we *must* believe, God would not, in so many parts of it, and in such express terms, have authorized us to acknowledge the Divinity of our Saviour, to lead us into error, and into an improper worship, derogatory of his own attributes.

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That there be expressions intimating the inferiority of the Son to the Father, is not denied—they only exalt our ideas of the immense distance, between God and ourselves, when we reflect, that our prayers are unable, or unworthy to ascend to him, but through a Redeemer's mediatorial intercession—Here the question may rest; nor need we concern ourselves with the idle reasonings of vain men.

That we are expressly directed to be baptized "in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," is sufficient authority for us to build our Faith on respecting the three persons employed in the word Trinity, and we have no occasion to bewilder and distract ourselves, by endeavouring to explain,

plain, what exceeds the limits of our comprehension, the Unity of the Godhead, but humbly to worship as the holy Scriptures direct us. The authenticity therefore of *them*, is all we have to ascertain; and that being undeniably evinced by the authority (as well as by their own internal evidence) of men of the highest human attainments, the best morals, and most consummate integrity, and from documents of the earliest times; we must be very presumptuous, as well as very absurd, to attend to the falacious reasonings of philosophers, under whatever disguise they attack our faith, and undermine our religious principles.

REWARDS

The disciples of Mahomet own, that Jesus was the Messiah promised by the Law and the Prophets; call him the WORD, the MIND and the WISDOM of GOD, and confess he had no human father; are they not as good Christians as the modern Unitarians: vid. Grotvini, de Ver. Lib. 6. Sec. iv.

REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS

COMPATIBLE WITH GENEROUS
FEELINGS.

THE advocates for the excellence of morality, without other motives than its own intrinsic beauty and fitness, (a doctrine alluring to young and generous minds) would thereby insinuate, that the believers of Revelation, instigated by selfish hopes of future reward, or servile fear of future punishment, have on *that account*, less disinterested love and veneration for the Deity—Whereas the contrary is the obvious and fair conclusion; for if to the consideration of his wonderful power, and goodness in creating and preserving us, and the whole fabric of
of

of the universe, (attributes which all but absolute Atheists acknowledge) be superadded his benevolent Revelation of his will, and with it, by the most perfect system of morals ever promulged, directing our conduct through life, with full assurance, that our obedience to its precepts will be highly pleasing to, and hereafter rewarded by him with eternal happiness, what mind is there but must be sensible of such accumulated obligations, and impressed with ideas suitable to such conceptions!

That a grateful heart will feel itself indebted in proportion to obligations conferred, will not be disputed—the Being who bestows on me the good things of this life *only*, which in the regular course of nature, can be but of short continuance,

continuance, and experience convinces me, is much chequered with the common accidents incident to those who enjoy even the best of its good things, gives me much less than he does, who gives me all the happiness I am capable of here, with an assurance, on my obedience to his commands, of infinitely more hereafter, to all eternity. This consideration therefore must enhance my ideas of his power, goodness and mercy, and claim a superior degree of gratitude than can be felt in the breast of those who imagine death terminates their existence.

These thoughts suggested themselves, and I wished to note them down, from reflecting, that many in early life are captivated by the sophistical writings of
 Lord

Lord Shaftsbury, and such moralists, the futility of which, maturer judgment and reason may fully evince them.—May those into whose hands I wish this paper may fall, be as clearly convinced of the divine truths of Revelation, as the writer of it is! A careful perusal of the holy Scriptures without prejudice, with the assistance of God's holy Spirit, and with an humble mind, will inevitably be productive of a sound and perfect faith.

It is possible (though not frequent) for a man who is an infidel in religious faith, to be good and amiable in all the relative duties of life—this may proceed from a proper sense of moral excellence, or from what may be deemed, *constitutional* virtue: would a belief of the divine revelation of the Christian duties
 such

such as one practices, lessen their value? It must stamp on them an additional worth.

There never was an instance of a conversion from infidelity to faith, that ever made the convert *less morally* good; on the other hand, how many instances have occurred to every one conversant in the world, where together with their infidelity, men have adopted all the depravities of human nature: the man of fine sentiment and the philosopher, may assert, and *possibly feel*, that virtue is its *own* reward—this is but a cold and comfortless pride, that the succeeding moment may put an end to; what additional and heart-felt satisfaction arises in his mind, who having fortunately had it in his power to do an honest, or a kind
and

and liberal act, not only gratifies his own benevolent feelings, but is also persuaded, that he has thereby pleased, and been obedient to the will of his heavenly Father, and as far as in him lies, made some small return for the infinite blessings continually poured down on himself, and is *on that score*, better entitled to the future rewards, promised in the gospel, to those who not only obey its precepts, but believe in their divine Author.

LONG

LONG LIFE,

WHEN AND WHY TO BE DESIRED.

A wise man, whatever may be his situation, will never be anxious for the long duration of life, but for fit and wise reasons—such as to make a sufficient provision for his family, if he is blessed with one, and if it be, honesty, in his power; to enable him by his precepts to instruct them in their duty to God and man, and to influence them by his own example—In respect to self, the great use we should make of advanced age, should be an habitual contemplation of the next life, that whenever it pleases God to admit us in a participation of it, we may be better prepared
with

with minds weaned from the objects and pollutions of the world, and *educated* to partake of the joys of Heaven, which possibly are such, as an impure soul, though admitted to them, may have little relish for.

As years encrease and bring with them, in the course of nature, infirmities and disappointments, every one have more or less, their real or imaginary share of, we should be particularly careful, not to suffer the last scenes of our mortal existence, to be clouded by peevishness and embittered by moroseness: morality, and a proper sense of religion, are the only remedies for this common disease of advanced age. Old people should accustom themselves to make every due allowance for the thoughtlessness

lessness and levities of youth, where they do not arise from a vicious and depraved mind: a furious censor morum will do much less good, in regulating the manners, and forming the morals of the young, than a less severe monitor—different modes and fashions succeeding to those we have been habituated to, where they do not lead to any thing immoral, should not be the constant objects of our ridicule: we shall never persuade the rising generation of their folly; and shall only raise their disgust, and give them a dislike to our society, the best chance they have of profiting by the wisdom, *time alone* has taught us, and which we must give them time to acquire. This does not preclude our pointing out to their observation the absurdities or improprieties

ties of the day, in a proper manner,
which will ever have the better effect,
where it is done with the best temper.

E REVELATION,

REVELATION,

NOT NECESSARY TO BE FULLY
COMPREHENDED.

THE most determined enemies of Revelation, never pretended to prove the impossibility of it, or to disprove it by absolute demonstration—We are, for that reason, under an indispensable necessity, of believing it on the evidence, we have for it, even were it *less* than it really is, when *none* can be brought against it. Thus we should distinguish evidence, which *is* on one side, from *only* argument and opinion, which are offered on the other.

The excellency of Christianity, as a rule of life, fully evinces its divine origin;

origin; nor can we doubt, its coming from God, when its precepts are such, as never entered into the heart of uninspired man, in his most exalted state of reason, to dictate—There are delivered down to us in the holy Scriptures, such doctrines and such precepts, in the clearest terms, as the most illiterate can understand; that there are parts the wisest cannot *clearly* comprehend, are strong arguments of their divine Author. They were permitted to exercise our talents, and to evince our faith: we are expressly assured, the very angels in Heaven do not yet fully see into all the dispensations of the Almighty—What then must our presumption merit, who demand explicit proofs to clear up every doubt. At the same time we may be persuaded, that far from con-

fining our enquiries as far as our finite-abilities permit, the divine Author of our Being is pleased with our search after his Nature, Attributes and Revelations, when we bring to it, a mind well-disposed to believe, and desirous of investigating the truths of Christianity, and habits of living conformable to its holy Doctrines.

The imperfect knowledge we have, is amply sufficient to influence our conduct; and faith built on it, which the Scriptures emphatically term, a *lively faith*, may entitle us, through the goodness of God, to rewards superior to what an higher degree of evidence, may have any right to expect, as our Saviour says, "Blessed are those, who do not see, and yet believe."

EDUCATION,

See Grotius de Ver. Lib. 2. ad fin. voluit enim deus id quod credi a nobis vellit, &c.

EDUCATION,

FOR THE NEXT LIFE.

THE Pagan ^e poets feign, and the philosophy of ^f Plato teaches, that the same passions and inclinations attend departed spirits, in their Elysian abodes, which animated them while on earth—An opinion worthy the consideration of more enlightened times: for while we are taught, that this life is only a state of probation for a future one, it can, *possibly*, only be so to such, as train, or
as

^e Quæ gratia Currum
Armorumq. fuit vivis, quæ cura nitentes
Pascere equos, eadem sequitur, tellure repositos.

Vir. Æ.

^f See his Gorgias.

as it were educate their minds to participate of such enjoyments, as they may be there supposed to meet with.

A soul totally devoted to the amusements and occupations of this world, may perhaps feel but little relish for those of the next; I say totally, for our Saviour, no where forbids a moderate use of even worldly pleasures. We should not presume to limit, the mercies and goodness of our Creator, but it is difficult to suppose, ^s the miser, the malevolent,

^s Socrates entertained an Idea of the purification of the mind, as a preparatory Education for future happiness. Vid. Plato, Phœd. Sec. 11, P. 180, et passim. Ed. Forster.

Non enim omnibus (says Cicero) illi sapientes arbitrati sunt, eundem cursum in cælum Patere: Nam vitiis et Sceleribus contaminatos depremi in Tenebris, atq. in cæno jacere docuerunt; castos autem animos, puros, integros, incorruptos bonis etiam Studiis atq. artibus expolitos leni quodam ac facili lapsu, id est, ad naturam sui similem, pervolare Cic. Fragm---Scripture confirms the idea.

malevolent, the over ambitious, the proud, the cruel, the revengeful, the vain, the glutton, the drunkard, or the wretch addicted to intemperate lusts of any kind, *can*, even when, divested of mortality, taste pleasures, wholly incompatible, with such depraved modes of thinking and acting.

Though we do not know, *what* the joys of the next life *may be*, we may be confident what they *are not*; that they are not congenial to the passions and appetites here enumerated; and that a spirit fully possessed by them, can find but ill entertainment, where such propensities can have no place: the question then naturally is, what is the best education, to fit us for future happiness? The answer is too obvious to

need pointing out. Revelation lays a great stress on an universal philanthropy; that kind of charity, the Gospel, and St. Paul (1 Cor. chap. 13), so finely describe.—We may also presume, that gratitude to, praise and adoration of, the supreme Being, may there constitute a portion of our felicity. The higher we can, devoid of enthusiasm, raise our minds, to these acts of devotion, while on earth, the more adapted *may* be our capacities for them, when we shall know so much more of the Author of all things, than we can here attain: it is possible, as the desire of knowledge is naturally implanted in our minds, which even the most enlightened can acquire in a very limited degree, while encumbered with body; that a more full comprehension
of

of all the wonderful operations of nature and grace, now concealed from our view, may *then* make a part of that happiness, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard—this idea should suggest to us, to *train*, our minds, as far as we are capable, to enjoy such a participation of science.

Another source, of our pleasures hereafter may be an association with those we have most loved, or esteemed in this life: this consideration should influence us in forming our connections with the good and the virtuous, and endeavouring, by our precepts and example, to secure an union with those in Heaven, who are most dear to us on earth, that as the poet sings,

“ *When*

*“ When soon or late we reach the coast,
 O'er life's rough ocean driven,
 We may rejoice no wand'rer lost,
 A family in Heaven.”*

Conjectures, though mere conjectures, of this kind can never be productive of ill; may do good, though liable to error and mistake; for after all we can surmise, we are expressly told, it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive, what stores of happiness await those, who fear God and keep his commandments.

ON

ⁿ Qualis autem ea sit felicitas, et quomodo comparetur, possunt quidam homines indigare; sed si quid ejus rei adeo patefactum est, id pro Verissimo ac certissimo haberi debet. Grot. de Ver. Lib. 1.

ON PRAYER.

BEFORE we presume to pray, we should consider, what we are about to do; that we are going to address ourselves to the great Creator, Preserver and Redeemer of the world, in comparison of whom, all Kings and potentates, are infinitely lower, than the most abject being in the creation, is to them: that were we to petition, an earthly Prince to forgive us an injury committed against his laws, or to grant us a favor, how careful should we be in our demeanor, how cautious in our expressions, how attentive while in his presence! In how different a manner, do we generally perform this duty to our God? A frequent and serious consideration

sideration of which ought to influence our behaviour in public and private prayer, for both of which, we should prepare our minds, before we presume to offer them; lest a duty, mercifully enjoined, and by our Saviour himself taught us, pervert those Blessings, we should otherwise obtain, into judgments: the latter will be the lot of those, who, in the performance of this duty, heedlessly *take God's name in vain*; the former, with the assistance of his holy spirit, which if we ask faithfully, we shall obtain effectually, will be the reward, if not in this world, certainly in the next, of petitions presented to the throne of Grace under a due sense of their high importance.

The

The necessity of frequent prayer, besides being enjoined in Scripture, is hence obvious; that it is morally impossible, however we may be surprised into sin, to continue in it, when we are uniformly attentive to this our bounden duty—" Let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts, be always acceptable in thy sight, O Lord our strength and our redeemer."

ON SUDDEN DEATH.

THE universal assent of the best and wisest of mankind, determining that this life is only a state of preparation for the next, should induce us never to let a day pass, without considering, that it *may* be our last—an habit of so accustoming ourselves, to meditate on death, will lead to an easy and even chearful reception of that King of terrors, whenever it approaches: we should frequently ask ourselves this question, (and the daily casualties we perpetually know or hear of, sufficiently authorize us) what our own thoughts would have been, were we *thus* suddenly called into the presence of God.—We must think we could then but imperfectly implore
pardon

pardon for our crimes, when no opportunity can be afforded, of ascertaining our *real* amendment, and of evincing, that our repentance does not arise from the exigence of the moment: it is very possible too, that time, or ability even for so an imperfect an attempt of reconciliation with God or with our fellow creatures, may not be afforded us; and our faculties may be instantly *so* impaired, that no sense of our condition may remain; but we may awake from a fit, a fatal accident, or the delirium of a fever, beyond the limits of this life; or that our reasoning powers may be so debilitated, as to render our best endeavours very inadequate to our wishes; and we may be under the necessity of leaving the state of our souls in the same circumstances, in which illness may attack,

tack, or death arrest us. This we may be most assured of, that an habitual disposition of mind, void of offence, as far as human infirmity admits, to God and man, constitutes the *only* solid and real happiness of this life, and secures a joyful passage to the next; both of which, that those for whose consideration I write this paper, may attain, is the constant and ardent prayer of their most affectionate parent.

ON THE STUDY OF
NATURAL HISTORY.

AMONG the sources of useful and entertaining amusement, natural history, and that branch of it, chemistry, stand foremost: a person, moderately acquainted, with the former, cannot see any production, of the animal, vegetable or mineral world, without making observations on its several properties, distinctions, beauty and fitness for the uses allotted to it by Providence; and an insight into the operations of the latter, lets us into some of the most hidden secrets of nature, which is found to perform all its various functions, according to established rules, developed in an

F high

high degree, though perhaps still very imperfectly, by the experiments and ingenuity of man; for in this science, and indeed in all others, though much has been discovered, still much remains to be yet explored, and every day adds to the general stock of knowledge; so wonderful and unbounded are the productions of infinite wisdom!

Every branch of natural philosophy presents many new and different objects of delight, and entertainment, and all tend to one and the same point, the Glory of God, who in wisdom hath ordained them all.

Who can consider the motion of the heavenly bodies, the flux and reflux of the sea, the mechanism of the human
frame

frame, and all the astonishing phænomena of the universe, without bowing down in humble adoration to that Being, who has created all things for our use, and most devoutly praying, we may never be so ungrateful, as to misapply them; and considering our finite faculties, earnestly wishing for that happy consummation, when, unincumbered with the corporeal substance, which now retards our attainments, we shall see, as we are seen, and know, as we are known.

It has pleased God, for reasons, no doubt wise ones, to make a great distinction in the abilities of mankind in the pursuit of knowledge, which even education, and the utmost diligence, though that will go a great way, cannot

obviate—happy are those, who blessed with quick intuitive parts, make a proper use of them ; but not less happy are they, whose progress, though slower, yet do not, on that account, slacken their endeavours—The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong ; the time *may* come, when the contest may be more equal—This we may be assured of, that we are applying our talents well, whatever they may be, when we are exploring the works of the Creation, and by such a search, raising in our minds, more sublime, and more exalted ideas of the Creator.

THE USE OF FREQUENTLY THINKING
OF, AND CONVERSING ON

DEATH.

THE uneasiness some very good people seem to feel when death is suggested as a topic of conversation, should by all means be obviated by religion, and by reason; there is nothing we should more studiously endeavour, to familiarize to our thoughts, than that goal, to which we are every moment hastening—young people especially, cannot be too frequently reminded of it; nor need we fear it will give them either a melancholy, or an enthusiastic cast of thinking.—It will assuredly have the contrary effect; as it will conduce, more than

any other consideration, to persuade them to a proper performance of their duty, when they are early impressed with an habitual conviction, they must inevitably, and may in a very few years, or perhaps in a very few hours, quit this world for ever.

Why then should we make such a bugbear of this first of human consolations? If our life be an happy one, if we have health, fortune and friends, and are taught to dread, or even to start at the approach of this King of terrors, every moment spent in happiness and in prosperity, will be alloyed by the consideration, that these our halcyon days, must soon terminate; that the tide of pleasure is ebbing fast, when our health will decline, our friends drop off, and
our

our fortune be no longer able to renew the one, or to supply the other.

Are we destined to struggle through the difficulties of this world, and our paths be strewed with disease, disappointments, and all the various calamities, incident to a large proportion of mankind; surely then we must confess, a conviction that these misfortunes will soon come to a period, must enable us to bear them with a chearful acquiescence in the will of Providence, and assuage the bed of sickness and of poverty.

In these reflections I would suppose, both the fortunate and unfortunate, to conceive themselves *ſo* living, as not, from a due sense of religion, to appre-

hend punishment in a future state; but the one should be taught to consider death, as the inlet to greater happiness than this life can possibly produce; and the other, that it will be a sure relief from all their miseries and all their afflictions.

They who are so unhappy as to suppose their conduct here, may render them liable to punishment hereafter, are in a more particular manner to be awakened to the uncertainty of their existence. No consideration can more powerfully operate towards their amendment: of all people therefore, *they* should make death and its consequences, the frequent subject of their thoughts, that what the good man looks up to
with

with joy and satisfaction, may cease to be to *them*, an object of terror and dismay.

ACQUAINT

ACQUAINT YOURSELF WITH
GRIEF.

IT is commonly and truly said, that one half of the world knows not how the other half lives; let it be in some measure our inquiry: nothing will more soften and humanize the soul, than *personal* attention to the wants of others; not merely relieving them by our distant charity, which though a duty and a commendable virtue, we may do from vanity, or because we abound, and can, without inconveniencing ourselves, spare it: we should visit the fatherless and the widow; the bed of sickness and of poverty; view the poor labourer languishing

ing with disease, and surrounded by a naked and half-starved offspring.

Scenes of this kind impress the soul with strong emotions of tenderness and compassion, and with an earnest desire to alleviate such complicated distress; and if we can contribute to its relief, it is impossible for an human mind to feel a sensation superior to what is experienced on such occasions.

The consolation that an attention of this kind, gives to a miserable object is very considerable, when they find themselves not totally slighted and neglected by their more prosperous fellow creatures—such scenes of distress frequently contemplated, will become powerful motives to prevail on us to
limit

limit many useleſs and unneceſſary expences; and whoever beſtows the money, they would otherwiſe lay out in needleſs ornaments or frivolous amuſements, to reſcue an induſtrious family, from cold, hunger and nakedneſs, will contribute more to their *own immediate* happineſs, than can be purchaſed by the gayeſt trappings, or the moſt joyous diverſions.

Add to this conſideration, that we are doing, what our duty to God indifpenſably requires, and all other arguments are unneceſſary, for to *that*, as our firſt object, we muſt ever look up, in every ſituation, and on every occaſion.

ON READING THE
HOLY SCRIPTURE.

A common opinion prevails, taken up without due consideration, and adopted even by many, who have a disposition for study, and love moral improvement, that the holy Scriptures, and religious books, are to be read only *one* day in the seven; and well truly it is, when *that* day is so employed; but let us not abide by an ill founded notion,

It should be our *daily* habit, to read a portion of the sacred writings; and a frequent perusal, of the works of our ablest divines, will throw such lights upon

upon them, and impress us with such a lively sense of their intrinsic excellence, and of our duty to God and man, so clearly and in many instances, in so captivating a manner, that one may venture to assert, not any authors on other subjects, will equally conduce to render a man, not only a better Christian, but even a more accomplished gentleman; by pointing out ⁱ the relative duties (the essence of good breeding) we owe to each other, and enforcing the fulfilling them, with manly eloquence, and in elegant language.

The word Sermon prejudices us
against the profit, and entertainment,
reading

ⁱ Cum tota Philosophia, mi Cicero, frugifera et fructuosa, nec ulla pars ejus inculta ac deserta sit, tum nullus feracior in ea Locus, nec uberius, quam de Officiis, a quibus constanter honesteq. vivendi præcepta ducerentur. Cic. de Offi. L. 3. sec. 2.

reading good ones cannot fail to afford; because, we are sometimes disgusted with the ill-conceived, or ill-delivered ones, we may happen to meet with: a good collection of such discourses, would form our taste as well as our morals, much superior to the trash often recommended to our attention.—An Atterbury, a Sherlock, a Secker, a Blair, with many others of an earlier or later date, should have a conspicuous place in the library of every young man and young woman, even in the fashionable world; and no small advantage both to themselves and to the world would ensue from their study of them.

Young minds are susceptible of early
^k impressions, and if their first thoughts
were

^k *Doctrina sed vim promovet insitam,
 Restiq. cultus pectora roborant;
 Utcunque, &c.*

Hor. Or. 4. 4. 33.

were properly directed, which possibly such writings may effect, being short and easier comprehended and retained, than more formal religious or philosophical treatises, there might be fewer instances of erroneous conduct, through more advanced life.

Let not the idle notion prevail, of *fearing* to make young people *too religious*; for one instance of the excess of it, there are thousands who run into the opposite extreme; and we may venture to assert, few ever became enthusiasts, who were brought up regularly pious, being less liable to the sudden impulses of the passions of every kind.

An essential part of true Religion, consists in chearfulness, humanity and
good

humour; let these virtues appear in our commerce with the world, and they will banish gloominess, the parent both of superstition, and enthusiasm.

ON TAKING

GOD'S NAME IN VAIN.

OF all the sins, the frailties and infirmities of mankind are prone to lead them into, there are none less excusable, as having less temptation, than that heinous one, of taking God's name in vain, not only in the highest act of wilful perjury, but the lower degree of profane swearing and cursing; and that most absurd one, of an *irreverent* use of it on every trivial occasion.

The evils resulting from the first, are destructive of all civil government; commit our lives, our characters and our fortunes to the depredations of the
most

most abandoned of the human species; subvert all order in society, render laws of no respect; weaken every degree of credit, and would soon overturn the best regulated system of human jurisprudence: these are evils of a public nature, which every community is bound to guard against with the utmost attention, or it will soon fall into anarchy and confusion.

The other kinds respect ourselves as individuals; and the first consideration should be, that whenever we are guilty of using the name of God *irreverently*, we are breaking a commandment, that absolutely and expressly forbids it; which should, if we considered, be sufficient of itself to prevent the act; but viewing this custom in a subordi-

nate light, what can induce us to such a breach of decency and good manners?

Every humane mind revolts at an imprecation, even when bestowed, as it frequently is, on the inanimate or brute creation: it then becomes ridiculous and absurd—when on human beings, were it possible to take effect, the idea is too shocking to dwell on; and were we to reflect, that it must inevitably recoil on ourselves, it is next to an impossibility, that the utmost heedlessness, could permit so sad a practice.

Was ever superior credit given to one habituated to call God to witness his veracity on slight occasions? We may safely aver the contrary; and without impeachment

impeachment of our charity, be suspicious, that the man who can be flagrantly guilty of profaning the name of his Maker, may be less scrupulous of infringing all his other laws.

In the company of our superiors, it is an insult, and a defect of good breeding; in that of our equals or inferiors, it is setting an horrid example, in proportion, as they may look up to, and imitate us. The weakest of all inducements, and what argues a total want of sense, as well as sensibility, is the idle notion, that an oath adorns our conversation—did it ever appear so in the mouth of a drayman or a porter? We can be shocked when we hear their blasphemous expressions, and at the

same time fancy they set off our own rhetoric to advantage; what folly and absurdity!

Very considerate, and even conscientious people in many respects, are but too apt to mention the name of God irreverently, in exclamations that have no meaning, nor meant to have any—were they to reflect, that they never do this, but they commit a sin, which they are assured by holy writ, they shall one day be called upon to answer for, they would surely break themselves, of so senseless, so ungratifying an habit, and earnestly pray to God, to keep the door of their lips.

SELF-

SELF-REVERENCE.

THE famous Greek Apothegm, of reverencing oneself above all other considerations, is one of the best pieces of advice, the moral wisdom of the ancients has delivered down to mankind—strictly adhered to, it would effectually guard us from every improper act, every improper word, every improper thought.

Whatever be our situation in life, *all* possess a certain degree of consequence, which we may, without the imputation of vanity or pride, assume, as a barrier against every deviation from rectitude of conduct; the higher we rank in so-

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ciety,

ciety. the more incumbent it is, to support that rank with true dignity.

In the lower classes, this self-respect is limited within the narrower bounds of honesty, sobriety, humanity and industry; but branches out into various combinations from the Peasant to the Prince; it would teach the labourer and the servant, that they owe *to themselves*, as well as to their masters and employers, a punctual and faithful discharge of their duty, beyond what is commonly performed—the tradesman, a fair mode of dealing, without taking advantage of the inexperience or the ignorance of their customers—the gentleman a strict adherence to every principle of honour, where *honour alone* can bind, not only towards their equals, but

but more particularly towards their dependants and inferiors, who may want power or courage to oppose oppression, and contend against superior rank or wealth.

This self-respect would be, (next to religion, the duties of which include it, and supersede all other arguments) an effectual guard against that most detestable, because meanest of all vices, lying, the bare suspicion of which, no man who values his reputation, as a gentleman can submit to—and were it *possible* to vindicate so shocking and wicked a procedure, the very imputation of it would be *some excuse*, as it often has been, for seeking personal satisfaction.

But

But there is a kind of self-reverence still more necessary, because a failure in it, with every equally evil tendency of a more open breach of truth, basely shelters itself in disguise—I mean that kind of prevarication of low, mean and ignoble minds: the man who *reverences* himself, will never be guilty of either the one, or the other; and will rather forego every advantage, than wound his *own* feelings, though it be highly possible, he may ever escape detection.

Self-approbation and self-condemnation are the two great sources of human happiness, or misery: the one cannot be attained, nor the other avoided, without a strict attention to our own private feelings; for by whatever plausible

fible appearances, we may impose on the world, we cannot impose on ourselves.

If to these considerations we add the sense of our duty to that Being, whom we *cannot* deceive, we shall never for a moment lose sight of this excellent maxim; but steadily observe it, as the palladium of our virtue, and of all that can exalt us, in our own esteem, without which the ¹ applauses of the world, will be empty and galling sounds, from a consciousness of our not deserving them.

BIOGRAPHY.

¹ Sed vereor ne cui de te, plus quam sibi credas. Hor. Ep. 1, 16. 19.

Egregium cum me vicinia dicat,

Non credam? Pers. Sat. 4, 46. et vid. Cic. Off. 2, xii.

BIOGRAPHY.

BIOGRAPHY is justly esteemed a most useful and entertaining study for young people—when they are acquainted with the general ancient and modern history of a country, the lives of the individuals of it, whether eminent for their virtues or their defects, are particularly worth attending to; as besides exhibiting a more minute detail of the times in which they lived, and of the transactions in which they were engaged, either as statesmen, warriors, or moralists, afford the best lessons for imitation, or disapprobation, so far as they may be placed in similar situations; but more essentially so, when we trace the characters of our own country, and
nearer

nearer our own times, and such as ourselves may be supposed, possibly to be called forth to act on the same stage of the world—It is there we should learn to discriminate, as accurately as we are able, the good and bad qualities that have raised some to fame and to honor, or consigned others to infamy and disgrace: the studies and the objects they have pursued, that have enlarged their minds, or contracted their ideas; the good they have done, and the evil they have avoided; the reputation they have acquired or the disesteem they have merited; and above all, as it is proverbially said of all, that none are happy, that is, secure of happiness before their death, how they have passed the last scenes of their mortal pilgrimage:

^m let

^m let an Addison be contemplated, as exemplifying how a Christian can die; and a Wharton lamenting, that his principles, his profusion, and his cruelty, corrupted his Friend, ruined his Child, and murdered his Wife.

Numberless are the instances in the annals of particular persons, in which may be pointed out, the very different sensations the religious and the moral man, from the monarch to the humblest cottager, experiences in this last of human trials—of the serene peace, and comfortable hopes, of the good and the virtuous; and the horrors and confusion of the profligate and the vicious; and much indeed are the advantages to be gained from contemplating such examples.

At

^m Johnson.

At that season, the mask which perhaps was worn for many preceding years and concealed them from the world, possibly, in some degree, even from themselves, drops off, and the man appears in his true light: ambition, avarice, sensuality, the pride of philosophy, and all the train of worldly follies and vanities, then cease to have any charms; and nothing can administer true consolation, but a sense of having done our duty, as far as human frailty permits, to God and man; and a confident reliance on the mediation of our Redeemer for the pardon of our sins: may such be the happy end of all!

THE

THE FAITH OF INFIDELITY.

WHATEVER high pretensions to free-thinking, Infidels make, *credulity* is their weak part; and it may be evinced, that from the lowest rank of sceptics, who glean up the hackneyed conceptions of their philosophical guides, to the most absolute and determined Atheist, they are *credulous* in proportion to their *incredulity*—rather than impute the formation of the world to an Almighty power, they will, which is much more hard of belief, deem it a fortuitous jumble of atoms, and its regular government, a work of chance: rather than believe the Mosaic history of the Creation, they will credit the fabulous
chronology

chronology of the Chinese, which even they themselves do not believe; the confused dynasties of Manetho, the cosmogony of Sanchoniatho, and the records said to have been inscribed on the pillars of Hermes, though they pretend not even to determine exactly, *when*, or *where* they existed.

Of the two great fathers of infidelity, Celsus believed brutes to be magicians; and Porphery had implicit faith in wizards, and necromancers, with many more fantastic, and improbable fictions—rather than give any countenance to the Scripture history of the deluge, they will account for the collection of shells and other marine substances found in places far remote from the sea, as having been conveyed thither by birds, or

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formed by any other equally improbable means: rather than believe the predictions of prophecy, they will suppose, that those predictions induced their subsequent completion—what folly! By a stretch of faith beyond all conception, they will impute all the operations of nature to second causes, and disbelieve a first—they will, in a word, cordially believe any suggestion of any writer, how improbable soever, so that it does but oppose, what they are interested to oppose, a Scripture Revelation—when we compare the absurd faith of such *stanch believers*, with the rational faith of a Christian, can we for a moment balance which to prefer!

CONSCIOUSNESS.

CONSCIOUSNESS.

WITHOUT entering into a philosophical discussion of the question, we may presume, *consciousness* in a future state, of the part we have acted in the present, to be a principle we shall then be possessed of; as may be infered from Scripture, and supported by reason.—Without it, we cannot in justice be called to an account for our actions, were no traces of them to remain in our memories; consequently there could not be, as we are assured there will, at the Day of Judgment, a trial, the very term of which implies, an opportunity, and a possibility of clearing ourselves from what we stand accused of—in what manner this trial will be conducted,

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ducted, or how far we may be admitted, to palliate or defend our conduct, is not for us to aim at discovering, because not revealed; and nothing less than a Revelation can explain it. It may be of use, in the mean time, to be persuaded, that it behoves us not to be less careful of our own conduct, than how far our precepts or example may influence others, who may perhaps, have it in their power to impute many of *their* failings to *our* charge; and it truly seems an equal, if not an higher crime, to incite others to sin, than even to commit it ourselves, as spreading the evil more diffusively, and without any temptation to palliate the offence.

It seems probable too, that this principle of consciousness, may be then
afforded

afforded us, in a much higher degree, than we have now capacity to attain ; for we scarcely, in this vale of flesh, recollect with any degree of accuracy, the transactions of the preceding year, or even day ; much less of a long series of past time—let this be thought of at an early period, before accumulated guilt terrifies us with the reflection, *how much* of it we have forgotten, but will be brought back to our remembrance.

As this supposed consciousness necessarily implies a personal knowledge of those hereafter, with whom we have been connected here, it is incumbent on us to reflect, how we shall meet such as we have defrauded, slandered or any other way injured ; and it may

be one reason for that more than commonly enforced precept, both in the Gospel, and in the other writings of the Apostles, that royal law, of universal charity and benevolence; for if we feel it not in a considerable degree on Earth, we shall be very incapable of enjoying it in Heaven.

Supposing this idea well founded, and it may not be easy to disprove it, it suggests to us, in plain and persuasive language, the advantage of forming such connections in this world, as may add to our happiness in the next; and that can only be, by associating with the good and the virtuous—such associations give us a ⁿ foretaste of Heaven,
and

ⁿ O præclarum diem, cum ad illud divinum animorum concilium cætumq. proficiscor cumque ex hac turbâ et colluvione discedam---ad Catonem meum, &c. Thus Cicero makes Cato solace his declining years; and thus sacred history makes David cry out, when he knew his son was dead, "he will not return to me, but I shall go to him."

and prepare us to enjoy the community of the spirits of the just made perfect—may such my dear children be our pursuits, and such the blessed and happy consummation of them!

HABITS.

WE pay too little attention to habits, and are not aware of what importance they are in regulating our conduct.—Man is proverbially, and with much truth said, to be a bundle of habits; and we are in almost every instance governed by them, without being aware of their all-powerful influence through the whole progress of our lives—habits of religion and of impiety; of intemperance and of sobriety; of indolence and of industry; of charity and of obduracy; of liberality and of misery; of humanity and of cruelty; of civility and of rudeness; in a word, every virtue and good quality, and every opposite vice and deformity of character, are all in
an

an high measure governed by the habits we form, either of the one or of the other: they become a second nature, and are familiarized by use. The difficulties and obstructions in the practice of virtuous or of vicious pursuits, lose or gain strength by habit; the deformity of vice is no more perceived, and virtuous propensities acquire additional force by reiterated acts—if we consider the universal power of habits, we shall attribute to them, either as active or passive, almost every thing we do in common life—when we, for instance, read, or hear a language spoken, what is it makes us, intuitively, as it were, assign such and such meanings to such and such characters, or sounds, but the habits we are in of hearing the one, and seeing the other? And thus we
may

may reason in numberless instances—thus it is a consideration worthy of our most serious attention to guard against any *habitual* indulgence that may be fatal to our best interests here, and our eternal happiness hereafter. Whoever would see this subject treated in a manner it deserves, may look for it in Bishop Butler's Analogy, part 1, chap. 5.—to the end of that chapter, on the state of moral discipline.

EARLY

EARLY EDUCATION.

THE early scenes of life, are some of the most important, though not commonly attended to, as of such high consequence : happy are they, the dawn of whose opening imaginations is carefully watched !

The mind has been aptly compared to a blank paper on which it is possible to imprint such characters, as shall not easily be defaced—this at least may be depended on, that though the hurry and levity of youth may somewhat obliterate them for a time, they will yet probably recur, when reflection shall arrive, and judgment come in aid.

It

It is not easily conceived but by those who have with parental anxiety attended to the first movements of young minds, how very soon they may be impressed with a due sense of right and wrong—an abhorrence of Falsehood, should be the first duty imprinted, as most essential, and most easily comprehended: love of their parents, and of those who supply their little wants, is a passion implanted by nature—the love of God, and the fear of offending him, as their Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, is to be inculcated, as soon as ever they are capable of conceiving any thing higher, than the immediate objects of their senses—as they advance in years, Humanity, general Civility, Humility, Modesty, Charity, Generosity, Industry, and openness of Temper, with
a strict

a strict and inviolable adherence, to Truth in the most minute degree, should be incessantly taught them, both by precept and example; and the opposite qualities of selfishness, cruelty, low-cunning, pride, obstinacy and indolence, checked to the utmost of our power: such early admonitions, what to pursue, and what to avoid, cannot fail of producing the best future effects, any more than the earth will refuse to reward the skill and industry of the husbandman, who knows, that without attention the most fertile soils will be over-run with thorns and weeds.

There is in culture and education, a close analogy between the human, the vegetable and the brute creation—if the latter are to be invigorated, re-
formed

formed and brought to the utmost perfection, only to be subservient to our immediate accommodation, and then to perish and be no more, how much more is it incumbent on us to superintend and regulate the conduct of those, who are to exist in eternity? And whose existence will be happy or miserable, in proportion to their conduct through life, so much of which it is in our power, with the blessing of God to direct and influence; and we may be assured of the assistance of his holy spirit, if we pray for it, to aid our imperfect endeavours.

As young people grow towards maturity, a still more attentive care becomes requisite, when high spirits, bad examples, the follies of the age, and
the

the passions incident to youth, all contribute to efface the best impressions—if they are neglected till this time arrives, as some modern minute philosophers advise, the chances are still more against them; though we sometimes see natural good dispositions, forcing their way through every impediment; and the sons and daughters of the profligate and vicious, become eminent for virtues their parents never taught them—the examples are rare and the risk too great to run, where the prize to be obtained by religion and morality, is eternal happiness.

Could young people be convinced, that as this life is only a preparative for another, so their youth is only a preparation for their subsequent well doing
in

in more advanced age, few arguments would be necessary to induce them, so to employ their early time, as to render their latter days, should they attain to any length, easy and honorable. A number of years consumed in vice and dissipation, or even in follies, though not absolutely vicious; or in mental and bodily indolence or debauchery, must induce an old age of remorse, vexation, disease and peevishness; and where a fortune has not been provided, generally of poverty and distress; and what is peculiarly galling, of contempt, and every species of disregard, the world is ever ready to bestow on the worthless and the undeserving.

Let a young person look round him, and see in what a different light the well-

well-informed, religious and moral man spends the evening of his days; the older he grows, his virtues become more conspicuous; his friends increase, his family honor him; and should it please the Almighty in his infinite wisdom, to inflict him with the common casualties and misfortunes of life, he bears them with a manly, composed and chearful mind, looking forward for the time, when all his miseries will be relieved, all his griefs assuaged, and all his tears wiped away, when entering into that state of bliss he firmly believes, is prepared for those who fear God and keep his commandments.

FAMILY LOVE.

AMONG the means by which, under the dispensation of Providence, families rise in the world, and by which their happiness is assured to them, as far as human means extend, concord and affection are most powerfully efficacious: they are strong and marked indications of a virtuous and good education; excite the regard and esteem of mankind, give mutual support and consolation in the adverse changes and chances of life, and enhance, by participation, all the advantages that may accrue.

The dying father in the fable, who taught his sons how difficult it was to
break

break a bundle of sticks, and how easy to snap them when single, gives an instructive lesson, and aptly teaches us, that where such an union is strongly cemented, the more numerous it is, the more security, and the greater blessings attend it; and we may appeal to experience to evince, that those families, are, we may unexceptionally say, the most virtuous and the most respected, where such endearing connections most uniformly subsist.

The benefits arising from these early and intimate bonds, do not apply to ourselves alone, or our immediate offspring: we often see them spreading, from example, through the collateral branches, and extending through large circles of relatives; than which nothing

in this life is more desirable. Benevolence is unlimited, and is perhaps when exerted in the highest possible degree in large families, the truest foretaste we can have of Heaven.

How often do we see, where one or more children, by some lucky, or rather, as I am always disposed to think, from some providential circumstance, rise to a degree of eminence, that enables them to advance the less fortunate; and thus a blessing is diffused over a large family, which amply compensates for the scanty provision *that* circumstance may have primarily occasioned—let us not then repine or despond, that our little property is obliged to be *minutely* divided; but trust, that under the all-bountiful and all-wise dispensations

tions of the Almighty, it may be of the greatest advantage.

Independant fortunes, especially for boys, are on no account so desirable, as the world generally deems them; the evils they lead to are infinite—habits of œconomy and industry, essential to our well doing in every situation, are best learnt in the acquiring of a fortune; and where one is made by our own laudable and honest pursuits, it is ever accompanied with more satisfaction and real happiness, than we are likely to experience, where our own endeavours have not contributed to the acquisition.

Females, from the few opportunities they have of bettering their lot, except

by lucky marriages, which young women of small fortunes, in these days, have little prospect of, are more dependant than boys; and for that reason it *more behoves them* to unite together in the strictest bonds of amity; as their little means, when united, will enable them to pass through life, with more credit and advantage, than when separately expended: when sisters have been educated, and lived together in harmony from earliest infancy; know each others good qualities, and even foibles, as the best have foibles, in addition to the ties of blood, which whatever some cold and unfeeling philosophers advance, have a powerful operation, it lies wonderfully within themselves to contribute to their mutual happiness; and such a natural friendship and society,

ciety, is the best succedaneum for the difficiencies of the good things of this world. These are considerations to be early impressed on the minds of youth under *similar* circumstances; come *home* to the feelings of many families; and is one strong reason why young women, more especially, should endeavour to supply themselves with funds of domestic amusements, such as a love of reading, drawing, music, gardening, and all such kinds of ingenious works, as may enable them to fill up the vacuum of life, should they not be destined to take an active part in it.

DUTY TO OUR FAMILIES.

OF all the talents committed to our charge, and for which we may possibly be called to the strictest account, what good use we may have endeavoured to make of them, the duties we owe to our children and our families, stand foremost, either for our own interest, for theirs, and for the interests of the community: it was imputed as an high commendation of the great Patriarch, and what entitled him to a particular blessing, that he ordered his children and his household in a proper manner: we may be assured, the same blessing will attend our following his footsteps, who was given us for an example.

The

The first duty to our offspring is to give them the best education we are able, suitable to their relative situation; and the first object of that education, is to instil into them, the love and the fear of God; the two great hinges on which their conduct through life will depend; and this idea of loving and fearing God cannot be too soon impressed on their tender minds, and if thus early implanted, will not easily be obliterated at a future period.

By loving God, we should teach them to consider him as the Author of their existence; the Preserver, the Protector, the Friend, and the Bestower of every good they now possess, and promising them superior happiness, when their present state terminates—that he ob-
serves

serves all their actions, all their words, and all their thoughts, as the holy Psalmist expresses it, " thou O Lord art about my bed, and about my path, and spiest all my ways."—Fearing him, they should be instructed, does not mean an abject, and base sensation, such as we may entertain of an angry mortal; but a generous, filial apprehension of offending, founded on love, somewhat similar to what an ingenuous mind experiences under the displeasure of a kind and indulgent Friend or Parent.

SOLITUDE.

SOLITUDE.

THAT he was never *less* alone, than *when* alone was the sentiment of a sensible ancient; indicated an active mind, capable of providing for its own entertainment; and assuredly they are of all others by much the happiest people, who are not constrained to seek abroad for adventitious amusements, but have them within themselves; in their professions, or employments; their literary pursuits, or in any innocent avocations.

We perpetually see the ennui and the peevishness of those, who having no domestic resources, depend on others, for what they often miss the attainment of; and are very lucky when they *do*
succeed

succeed, that the acquisition be not accompanied with many evils—but this maxim of the wise Pagan, may be applied by us Christians, to an higher and a better purpose, from the conviction, that we really and in fact, *never are alone*; and that in a sense, if not fully made known to them, (though by no means such Atheists as some modern Doctors) is not sufficiently attended to by us.

We are expressly taught, that the all-seeing Eye of our heavenly Father is ever watchful over us; that not only our actions, but every thought of our heart is open to his omnipresence and omniscience; and it is highly to be presumed, we may be the immediate associates

ciates of innumerable ° ministering spirits and angels—What powerful influence should a persuasion of this doctrine have over our minds? Impressed with the force it deserves, it would ever be our best palladium, and we should feel ourselves *less* solitary, in the most secluded retirement, than in the gayest circles: at least we should never repine for the want of such engaging society, as it may not, perhaps happily for us, be our lot to fall into.

“ I pity an unlearned gentleman on a rainy day,” was said by one, who ever made the best use of his time, and found the advantage of it, when driven from the active life of a great statesman,

^o We are confirmed in this supposition by various passages in Scripture---and see St. Matt. xviii, 10.

statesman, he was exiled from his family and his country; then it was, that a well cultivated mind, and a good conscience, supported him in solitary banishment.

Attend to such instructions, my dear Children, and in early life, learn to be your *own best friends* and *companions*, and you will want few others; you will meet with none more faithful, nor, if it be not your own fault, with none more innocently entertaining.

REFLECTIONS.

REFLECTIONS.

OUR Saviour's declaring (Matt. x, 34.) that he came *not* to send peace but a sword on earth, means, not that it was his design, but that he knew it would be the effect of his mission; and is therefore, in the accomplishment, a convincing argument of his foreknowledge, and consequently of his divinity.

Esau and Jacob were types of the Jewish and Christian dispensations, when the former sold his birthright at so cheap a rate.

When the Roman Empire was overrun by the Northern Barbarians, the
little

little learning that remained, was principally preserved by the Christian clergy.

Superstition is not the effect of Religion—it is a natural weakness in the human mind, that the Gospel was intended to destroy; and more of it now prevails in the Heathen, than in the Christian world.

Revelation assures us, that we are qualified and designed for endless improvements in goodness and happiness, which depend on our own care and industry, excited and assisted by the grace of God—What a comfortable and consolatory reflection, and how assiduous should it make us to avail ourselves of such an assurance!

That

That our souls or spirits shall be sensible of existence previous to the general Resurrection of our bodies, is implied in many parts of Scripture.

From the essential difference between the works of nature and of art, a comparison of the infinite felicity of the next life, and what degrees of it may be obtained by the most consummate happiness in this, may not be unfitly illustrated. In the one we are sometimes astonished at their excellence, on viewing them with our natural optics; yet on a more accurate inspection by adventitious assistance, we never fail to find flaws and imperfections in their most finished operations: in the other, the nearer we can inspect into their nature, from the immense system of the

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universe,

universe, the boundless ocean, the cloud-capt mountains, and the great Leviathan, to the minutest Atom and almost imperceptible Insect, our astonishment, and admiration of their respective uses, beauty and fitness increase, and we may be assured would continue to increase, were we endued with powers of investigation, beyond what art has yet supplied.

So we may by analogy presume it to be in regard to this life and the next—the highest human felicity when experienced, and nearly viewed, is found to be mingled, with the accidents and casualties, the unavoidable occurrences that have never yet failed to be interwoven with mortality and to deform it, exclusive of its rapid approach to dissolution ;

lution; but Revelation assures us of such a perfect, unceasing, unmixt state of happiness hereafter, as eye has not seen, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive; that is, as imagination can form no idea of, because not relative to any thing on earth, or any object of our senses.

The immediate prosperity of good people in this world, is not so evident under the present œconomy of Providence, as it was under the Jewish dispensation—there was *then* more occasion for it, when the happiness and rewards of the next life were less clearly discerned—How great is our advantage over them in this respect!

It is a sad error some people run into, of mistaking what they call *Repentance*

for *Religion*; whereas, when we commit sin, repent and sin again, we only aggravate our guilt; as we then offend, under a full conviction of doing wrong—the uniform sinner has, perhaps less guilt, at least less uneasiness, as being less sensible of it—the Scripture, and the only true idea of repentance, is amendment carried into execution, by a constant and unremitting obedience.

Mysteries are not positive but only relative: nothing is a mystery to God; every thing is so to man: his own existence, the existence of every object that surrounds him in all the elements he is connected with—Why then should we not expect to meet with what we cannot understand in the mystery of our redemption, as well as in that of our creation?

We

We are not bound to believe what is contrary to our reason. We *must* believe in various instances, what surpasses our reason to comprehend, when sufficiently authorised—this, when applied to Religion, is properly called faith; and when founded on the authority of the holy Scriptures, is Christian faith.

Speculative reasoning will never produce common opinion, because men differ as much in the turn and capacities of their minds, as in the formation of their bodies, or the features of their faces.

The persuasion of Rewards and Punishments in another life, as merited in this, is an opinion as old and universal,

as any knowledge we have of mankind, in any period of their existence, or in any state of their society.

The Heathen Poets were the Papists of Antiquity; as the one corrupted the simple Religion of the Gospel, so the other did the same by the genuine sentiments of nature, and obscured the light of reason by the wild conceits of folly and superstition.

Had it not been for philosophy, which perverted natural reason, mankind would never have disputed the immortality of the soul; they rejected the notion of it, because they could not find physical causes to support their belief, and were unable to form conceptions of unbodied beings—*Apud in-*
feros,

feros, quæ sine corporibus nec fieri possent nec intelligi, says Cicero; thus infidelity and philosophy marched hand in hand.

What the reason of man could not discover, his pride would not let him believe: it was in this sense the Gospel is properly said to have brought life and immortality to light; that is, threw such a splendor on it, which no human reason was previously competent to obtain.

Whenever Religion comes to be esteemed *only* as a political institution, which *may* have its use in the government of mankind, it will soon cease to be even of that consequence. A pious sense of its eternal obligation must influence us, to render its effects truly

beneficial even in this world. It seems tending towards that state in a neighbouring country. ^P

The same maxim holds good in Religion and morality, as in all human attainments; *non progredi est regredi*—If we are supinely contented with our present state of piety and virtue, we are

^P Since the above was written, the entire destruction and avowed abolition of all sacred Worship, and an open Profession of Atheism, has been endeavoured to be established, by the formal Resolutions of the ruling Powers in that devoted Country---a similar Instance never occurred in the Annals of Mankind, of such a religious War---when not, as heretofore, Christianity and Paganism, the Cross and the Crescent erected the Standard against each other; but when an whole great Nation professedly wages it against God Almighty himself, and all his holy Ordinances---the Idea of such unparalleled Blasphemy strikes us with an awful dread and horror for the consequences we may suppose, must ensue---*Quos deus vult perdere, prius dementat*--What are we to think of the Principles of those, who in this happy Island, are known to abet the Proceedings, and wish well to the cause of the Authors of such universal Depravity and Anarchy? The most exalted Charity will not permit us, not to conclude, they would act the same Parts, in subverting of all order and Government, divine and civil, were it equally in their Power.

are in much danger of relapsing into irreligion and vice—We assuredly shall not go on perfection.

St. Peter rests our faith in Christ as a proof of our belief in God.—Epist. c. i, v. 21.—How near does Infidelity approach to Atheism? St. John is explicit in this point.

The superintendence of Angels or good spirits over good men, seems to be implied in St. Matthew, c. xviii, v. 10.—Heb. c. i, xiv and xxix.

Ambition for attaining the first rewards in Heaven is an holy ambition, because it induces us to merit them, by doing all the good we possibly can on Earth.

The

The Reformation brought about by Luther and his successors, was not only of effectual use to the great interests of Christianity, and to those countries that adopted its doctrines, but was highly so to those who still adhered to the Roman Catholic Religion—The Clergy, and even the Popes found it necessary to reform their licentious Conduct, when liable to be publicly arraigned; and were under the necessity of acquiring knowledge and science, to enable them to defend their tenets against their more learned and pious Antagonists. The same advantage accrued even to Paganism from the preaching of the Gospel.

Much of our happiness or misery
through life, our improvement in arts
or

or science, as well as in virtue and real goodness, depend in an high degree, on the train of thinking, that most habitually occupies our minds, both in our vacant, and in our more serious hours—As far as the direction of our thoughts may be in our own power, (and that it is in a great measure, though not perhaps *always* absolutely so, cannot be doubted) it is of the last importance, to give them that turn which is most subservient to useful and valuable purposes. Vid. Wisdom, c. i, 10, &c.

Politeness, and what the world generally deems good breeding, is acquired by an attention to little things—Very great men are seldom very polite—Something similar occurs in respect to learning, and a knowledge of
books

books—A lucky criticism, a sonnet, or a classical expression, will frequently gain a man more credit, than often is acquired by deep erudition: most men are fond of applauding the one; few are judges of the other.

We seem anxious to conceal our pains in reading, and would have our attainments be supposed to arise from genius—The Bacons, the Falklands, and the Hydes of other times had not that affectation—the consequence is, the affectation becomes real, and we don't read, lest we should be taken for laborious Pedants—Ignorance ensues.

We often read from the same motive that an indifferent musician plays, present amusement, though conscious of
never

never being master enough of his instrument to perform in concert, or to entertain others—This is not a bad reason, when we have no higher object in view.

To think for half an hour, is of more consequence than to read for a whole day—This presupposes the subject of our thoughts well chosen.

Great fortunes, *suddenly acquired*, are generally the effect of roguery, or very extraordinary good luck: the chances are to be rich, or to be hanged; if you escape the *cart*, which you *deserve*, you may possibly ride in the *coach*, you *do not deserve*.

No man has reason to complain of another mans good fortune, who will
not

not use the same means to acquire one—A roguish attorney, a gambler, or a tavern-keeper become rich, while you remain poor—Will you be a rascal, or bear a kicking? The industrious, frugal and honest man, has very, very seldom cause to complain on this score; and should it so happen, he has consolations that make him ample amends.

The discovery of America seems to have connected the Globe—We buy men in Africa to dig the mines in America, to procure the metals, with which the Europeans purchase the commodities of Asia; and this so late discovery of one half of the Globe, is a convincing argument in support of the Mosaic chronology. Many parts are even yet unknown.

The

The frequent contemplating a perfect character, is a powerful means of becoming such by imitation—Great historical, or amiable private characters, are in this view well worth studying; but far greater advantage will accrue, can we recollect such an one within the circle of our own acquaintance, I now think of—the reason is obvious—we enter more thoroughly into the character of a Lear or an Hamlet, when a Garrick, as it were, personifies, than when Shakespear paints them to the imagination only.

It is pleasant to divest real objects of their reality, and to imagine them pictures, and the work of art—May not characters be so viewed, that we may consider them to be so many actors?

Such

Such a view of things must assist in forming a judgment of poets, painters and players.

A failure in essentials may be suspected, where *too* great attention is paid to trifles—this may be found true in Religion, Politics, and all the civil duties of life.

When people cavil at Christianity, they only consider the abuses of it, which are no more to be laid to its charge, than any other evils which may arise, from the wickedness, the weakness, or the perverseness of mankind: the law, for instance, is a system of consummate wisdom; yet to what ill uses is it often put, by its depraved professors! Pious frauds and follies cannot injure true Religion.

What

What ever degree of obscurity there may be in Christianity, is without doubt thrown over it by the all-wise God, for the best of purposes—though there *may* be facts of which I cannot clearly see the reason, I do not even wish to have them so cleared up to my comprehension, as to leave no room for the exercise of my faith. It has been said by one of the fathers, “ That he believed because it was impossible:” that may be carrying it too far; but I agree with the sensible author of *Religio medici*, that I do not even *wish* to have seen the miracles our Saviour performed, but had rather believe them on the Scriptural authority, whereby they have been delivered down to us. I might, perhaps, in the former case, mistrust

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my

my own senses; in the latter, I have *accumulated* concurrent testimony.

The happiness of this life, is seldom, perhaps *never* adequate to the ideas we form of what it *might* be. In its nature uncertain and transitory; and even when obtained in the highest possible degree, inevitably tending to a conclusion—not so the pursuit of it, when the object aimed at, has the next life in view; for then every year, day, hour and moment bring us nearer to the attainment of our wishes; and a well-founded confidence, that doing our duty to God and man, will entitle us, through the merits of our Redeemer, to the happiness promised in the Gospel, will alleviate every misfortune, enhance every blessing, and
lead

lead us to the grave, not only without terror, but even with tranquillity and joy.

Accurate definitions and axioms preclude all disputes in Mathematics—these were successfully applied to natural philosophy by Sir Isaac Newton—Whatever is built on conjecture is improperly called science; for conjecture may beget ^a opinion, but cannot produce knowledge. “*Causas rerum naturalium non plures admitto quam quæ veræ sunt, et earum Phænomenis explicandis sufficiant.*”—The great rule laid down by him—thus when he had discovered the effects of gravity, he presumed not to assign its cause.

Every

^a Cebes says the opinions never enter the boundary of Knowledge. Ceb. Tab. P. 42, Ed. Glasg.

Every operation implies power; but every power does not imply operation.

Every system which pretends to account for the Phænomena of nature by hypothesis or conjecture is spurious: men *then* only begin to have a true taste in philosophy, when they have learnt to hold hypothesis in contempt, and to consider them as the reveries of speculative men, which will never have any similitude to the works of God.

It is an incontrovertable fact, that mankind, whether considered collectively or individually, are happy in proportion to their virtue and industry.

The history of the stage is a subject of philosophical curiosity; as in every nation

nation it is intimately connected with the history of manners.

We have good reason to presume, that the discovery of arts and sciences was originally by divine inspiration—thus Bazaleel, and Aholiab, were taught to work for the tabernacle. *Exod. xxxi. and Paf. and vid. Kings, i, 7, 14.*

Blair in his discourses, Vol. 1, Ser. 4, says, “ Happy moments there some-
 “ times are, in the lives of pious men,
 “ when sequestered from worldly cares,
 “ and borne upon the wings of divine
 “ contemplation, they rise to a nearer
 “ and transporting view of immortal
 “ glory; but such efforts of the mind
 “ are rare, and cannot be long sup-
 “ ported.”—We should not perhaps

presume to expect *such* a degree of the divine effusions of the spirit; nor need good people be cast down, because they cannot exalt their minds towards Heaven in such rapturous contemplations; they may not even be proper for every one; and may in some be constitutional, and the effect of a superior warmth of imagination—A calm and sedate Religion should be the aim of all, and is more likely to be steady and permanent.

A man is much easier persuaded and flattered into goodness than forced—By the one you render him better pleased with himself, which will lead him to endeavour to be still more so; by the other you enflame his passions, and consequently injure the cause you wish to support,

support, and impede the effect you aim to bring about.

To be *poor* in spirit, in the language of Scripture, is a very different thing from being mean spirited; the one is incumbent on the greatest and the noblest; the other unbefitting even the lowest.

How inferior and how different is the philosophy of human wisdom to that of the Scripture! Epictetus advises, if you have a vicious son, to suffer him to remain so, rather than molest yourself to render him otherwise. *Κρεττον δε τον παιδα κακον, η σε κακοδαιμονα.* Sec. xii.

In this world, attainment is generally the period of happiness—When

we have nothing to look forward to, we too often cease to enjoy—this incongruity may be wisely and kindly assigned us by Providence, to direct our pursuits to the enjoyment of a state, no more liable to change.

Fear and love are the two great operative powers, that regulate our conduct, whether in respect to those we regard in this life, or to determine our obedience to our Creator—When the one is perfect, it casteth out the other.

The history of the destruction of Jerusalem, so clearly foretold by the Prophets and by our Saviour, seems to have been by Providence delivered to us by a *Jewish* historian, who was himself a witness of the whole transaction,

tion, and thus undesignedly confirms the predictions: had the sad detail been made by a convert to Christianity, its veracity might have been questioned by succeeding ages; so astonishingly terrible was their own imprecation (Matt. xxvii, 25.) accomplished; and they were annihilated, as a settled people, by those very Romans, for the fear of whom (John xi, 48.) they demanded the death of the Lord of life.

The non-restoration of what we happen to find, to the right owner, was punished by the Levitical law, equally with notorious robbery. Lev. vi, 3,

Melancthon seems to have been the most learned and the most moderate of
all

all the reformers; true learning teaches moderation—*emolit mores, nec finit esse feros.*

One great *temporal* advantage of Religion, is preventing our committing those follies and sins that generally bring on misfortunes, disease and misery in *this life*, exclusive of the next.

How happy is that man who has no part of his conduct he wishes to conceal, even from himself!

Historians deem that period of time from the death of Theodosius the Great, A. D. 395, to the establishment of the Lombards in Italy under Alboinus in 571, a space of 176 years, as the most calamitous of the annals of mankind.

This

This *is* my duty, nothing shall *ever* induce me to swerve from it—this *is not* my duty—no consideration shall ever tempt me to commit it—when we can fix our resolutions steadily and invariably to these two points, how virtuously and how nobly shall we pass through life!

If we could accustom ourselves every night to revolve in our minds the transactions of the day, as far as we are able, on a review, to recall them; what we have said, what we have done, what we have omitted, what levities in thought, word and deed we have been guilty of; what censures we may have passed on others, and how seldom we may have reflected on our own relative situation to God and man; this would
not

not only preclude any very heinous crime, but induce such an *habitual* attention to our general conduct, as cannot fail to bring us to that state of purity, that will conduct us with comfort and self-satisfaction through this life; and undoubtedly secure us the happiness of the next—What consolation will such a frequent scrutiny afford, when we find our dissolution approaching, either by the gradual progress of time, or the more sudden attacks of disease or accident.

There is one peculiar advantage which men of esteemed Virtue, Religion and Morality have over those of a reputed different description; that they are not only openly respected and valued by the good and the worthy; but
(however

(however their own conduct apparently differs from them) inwardly, even by the depraved and the abandoned; which appears from hence, that they will sooner entrust their most momentous worldly concerns, as they may regard themselves or their families, to the *one*, than to the *other*; which is paying them an higher compliment, than if they had sought them out, as favored companions in their hours of levity and dissipation.

All the prayers in our most excellent Liturgy (that of St. Chrysostom excepted, which is addressed immediately to him) conclude with an intercession, through our Saviour, as Mediator between God and us; we should recollect, that we cannot, humanly speaking,
have

have any merits of our own, that can balance against our daily and hourly infirmities; for repentance cannot *undo* any thing we may have done amiss, so as to excuse us from punishment, much less entitle us to reward.

The empire of superstition is always most powerful at the farthest extension from the seat of its government—those frailties, vices and imperfections, that deform it when they come under a near view, are either not known, or not credited, when contemplated at a distance; and thus it is in common life, few people appear *very great* to their most intimate acquaintance.

When we reflect, that our Saviour rested the proof of his divine mission, on
his

his own death, and subsequent appearance on earth, together with the persecution and death of his disciples, it is such an insuperable argument for the truth of his doctrine, as nothing similar to it ever occurred before or since; and the completion was astonishing even to his immediate friends and followers.—No impostor ever appealed to *such* a mode of trying his pretensions.

The Christian Religion cannot be imputed to policy or priest-craft; for all the politicians and the priests of the time, opposed it.

An excuse some people make for not going to Church, is grounded on an unfavorable opinion they have formed of the Ministers of it—this may *possibly*

fibly be ill-founded; and we may be glad to catch at any *plausible* reason for neglecting a duty we have no inclination to perform: yet supposing there *may* be some real objections; we should consider, that it is incumbent on us to go there, to hear the word of God, which we are bound *publicly* to honor, let *who* will be the legal messenger of it; especially, if our weight and consequence, from our rank and abilities, may set an example to others.—No man ever deserts the house of his friend and benefactor, because he dislikes his servants.

• If nature had fully instructed us in Religion, a Revelation of it from God Almighty had been needless: this knowledge was *never* acquired by natural abilities

abilities—hence the necessity of one; for it is impossible to pay a reasonable service to a Being, till we have some reasonable notions of him, which *that only* has taught us.

In regard to Revelation, the only question is, whether there really *be one*, or *not*—if not, the whole is a forgery, nor have we any call to concern ourselves about it—But if there *has* been one, we are bound to receive it as delivered to us, nor presume to cavil against any part of it; for *then* we set up our own wisdom, in competition with the wisdom of God—can there be a greater mark of folly!

Mankind are apt to complain, that
the full enjoyment of the pleasures of
M this

this short life, should be liable to an eternity of punishment in the next—have they not more reason to deem an eternity of happiness, more than a sufficient compensation for complying with a few restraints during the very limited period of their earthly existence? Let them balance the one against the other; and not like Esau, sell their birthright for a trifle, and like him be unable, by their repentance and prayers, to obtain the blessing.

The pursuit of happiness is like a man travelling in a mountainous country, who thinks when he has ascended an opposing hill, he shall have an extensive prospect, and sit down to enjoy it; but behold another obstructs his view, and bounds his horizon.—Thus
it

it is, when we have obtained what appeared the summit of our wishes, something at a distance becomes the object of our desires—When these unattainable pursuits render us discontented with what we possess, they become the source of uneasiness; and when carried to excess, sinful: but this world not being designed as our abiding place, Providence may graciously have implanted in our natures, a wish for something not here within our reach—when we can direct our views toward the enjoyments this life cannot supply, we shall then bear the disappointments we meet with in it, with patience and resignation.

Some people seem to think, that a constant, daily contemplation of dying,

M 2

must

must interfere with, and imbitter the pleasures and satisfactions of life; they should correct this error—do we not go to sleep more at our ease, and with less anxious thoughts, when we believe our houses well secured against robbers, fire or other casual accidents, which it is possible, may never befall us? Death, we well know, we are certainly liable to; and are told, it sometimes comes, like a thief in the night—When we are on our guard to receive him, the phantom vanishes, and we bid defiance to all its terrors.

We are bound to believe, though we cannot comprehend, the great mystery of the Trinity, in the *degree* that vain men pretend it should be understood, in order to be believed; for
what

what difficulties are not to be expected, when a finite mind contemplates an infinite object?—Every substance, every atom in nature, is, in fact, beyond our comprehension; but in respect to the blessed Trinity, and what the Scripture requires us to receive on the faith of Revelation, (when we do not presume to explain it, by assuming farther knowledge than God hath given) there is not any thing, that cannot be reconciled to, or that is contrary to reason: we should neither doubt what the all-wise God hath taught, nor too curiously pry into what he hath thought fit to conceal.

Let it be our constant and daily usage to read some portion of the holy Scripture—this custom, with the blef-

fing of God and the assistance of his
 spirit, in aid to our pious and honest
 endeavours, will secure us more than
 any thing else can, from all evil, and
 teach us the true language of Religion.
 We shall not then blindly cavil at pas-
 sages in holy Writ, nor entertain inju-
 rious opinions of the sacred Oracles,—
 We shall learn to reverence them as we
 ought to do, nor ever suffer ourselves
 to be induced to entertain thoughts,
 derogatory to the divine Fountain from
 whence they proceed: let us never
 permit the scoffs and reproaches of the
 libertine or the infidel, to lessen them
 in our esteem; nor ever, on any con-
 sideration, presume to quote, or allude
 to them, *irreverently*; a folly, as has
 been well said, no wise man will allow
 himself, because of the impiety of it,
 and

and no witty man, from the easiness with which it is often done by the silly, the profane and the ignorant—this is extracting poison from the bread of life, for a “ Scorners seeketh wisdom and findeth it not”—“ Cease then my Son to hear the instruction, that causeth to err from the words of knowledge.”

A knowledge of the true God, was by the Jews promulgated through the world, and spread by them among the Gentile nations, first in Canaan, then in Egypt—Jethro among the Midianites learnt to adore him—during the captivity, they taught the knowledge of him in the countries to which they were carried, as appears by the determinations of Nebuchadnezzar, Cy-

rus and other eastern Monarchs, in their favor—It is probable also, that Zoroaster derived the purity of his doctrines from the same source; and that too, the Greek Philosophers acquired the ideas they obtained of him, from the Revelations made to the Jews—from the time of Alexander, that nation was much more widely dispersed, and they every where read and explained the Scripture in their Synagogues, to which devout or inquisitive people among the Gentiles, constantly resorted.

What ever misfortunes or casualties happen to us in this life, either in the loss of Friends, Relations or Property, it is our duty to submit to the dispensations of Providence—When Job was told of his accumulated disasters, “ He
“ fell

“ fell down and worshipped, and blef-
“ fed the Name of the Lord.”

The Philosophers of all times have sought, and sought in vain, to ascertain the summum bonum, or chief good; some have placed it in power, some in riches, and some in sensual enjoyments—but the Christian is taught, and experimentally finds it, in Religion alone.

The vicious and the idle are eager to make others like themselves; they seek for companions and associates; they would otherwise stand single in their folly, and be forced to become virtuous and industrious, in spite of their own inclinations—*numerus defendat*, is applicable to societies of all kinds, whether good or bad—What an important object

ject is it, with what sort of people we connect ourselves, especially in the outset of life!

Vice, Pride and Ignorance are the three handmaids of Infidelity—the gratification of the sensual passions; the lust of wealth, by whatever means acquired; a vain unfounded idea of superior knowledge; or lastly, consummate ignorance, which would rise to eminence under the banners of those who assume a rank in literature they have no claim to, are the sources from whence all the muddled, perturbed streams of scepticism flow—What man of common sense would enlist under such leaders!

· It may well seem to be the interest of the profligate and the abandoned, to
disbelieve

disbelieve the doctrines, that they may disobey the precepts of Christianity ; but the virtuous and the decent part of mankind will suspect the wisdom of those Philosophers, whose design is to set them free from every divine and human restraint.

Compare the general conduct of such as truly *are*, and live *as* Christians, with that of characters of an opposite description, and it will be evident, why the *one* rejoices in the choice he has made ; and the *other* trembles, when he approaches the gulf, his vices, his vanity, or his wilful ignorance have opened for his reception.

It is to be inferred from Scripture, that our Saviour was a propitiation for the ages previous to his human existence

tence on Earth; and that *through him* (the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Rev. xiii, 8.) the good were always redeemed; "For as in Adam
 "all die, so in Christ, shall all be made
 "alive." 1 Cor. xv, 22. One among the many arguments against the cavils of such as object to his not appearing till so late.

When I look into the writings, or hear the conversation of modern Philosophers, and am taught by them to distrust Revelation, because *they* cannot account for the Mysteries it contains, and fancy they perceive absurdities and contradictions; and consider that these objectors, are men of great and extensive learning; I may be staggered in my faith, and disturbed in my
 opinions;

opinions; but when I open my Bible, and there read, in the plainest language which words can possibly convey; that we are expressly commanded to be baptized in the Name of, and believe, that the Son of God existed from all eternity; that he came down from Heaven, dwelt on Earth, and visibly ascended thither again, and promised the aid of the holy Spirit to all who believe and obey his doctrines; all my doubts vanish; all metaphysical reasonings, and the pride of learning dissolve, like the baseless fabric of a vision, dispelled by the superior light of divine truth.

It is as much our indispensable duty to regulate our understandings and our inquiries well, as it is our passions and our actions; and to be *more* on our
guard

guard against errors to the *prejudice* of Religion and virtue, than against *those* in their *favor*: the one must be pernicious; the other will, however we may be liable to mistake, be innocent and praise-worthy.

Our religious faith should not be suffered to be supine and inactive; we should frequently stimulate it, by repeated attentions, which would enliven and invigorate it.

“ Let your light so shine before men,
 “ that they may see your good works.”
 An excellent precept against that *mauvaise honte* young persons sometimes have, of appearing *that* character, which they *really are*, and which alone can ensure their happiness: an open profession
 and

and practice of Religion, free from affectation or moroseness, will be a guard against the attacks of the profligate, and secure to us the esteem of the good.

They presume to be the great advocates of mental liberty, who would rob us of those opinions, which as the excellent Secker says, “ Tend to make
 “ every individual virtuous, and every
 “ society flourishing; which comfort us
 “ under all afflictions here, and delight
 “ us with the hopes of endless felicity
 “ hereafter—We have no reason to
 “ thank them for propagating the belief of an ungoverned world, of
 “ unrewarded virtue and unpunished
 “ villany—of God’s having left his
 “ creatures without instruction in their
 “ duty,

“ duty, without certainty of his par-
“ don and grace, and without assu-
“ rance of future existence.”

When we contemplate our situation on this spot we call the Earth, which is to the Universe but as a grain of sand, and consider, that from the most authentic evidence we can collect, this habitation of ours, wonderful as it is, has not existed for more than about six thousand years, a space of time that bears no proportion to eternity, we are lost in the immensity and grandeur of the idea—our finite comprehensions can conceive nothing commensurate to boundless time and space—we must suppose, insignificant as we necessarily feel ourselves, that myriads of peopled orbs, have, do, and will continue to exist, without

without end, when this our Globe, may have attained its limit, in the unlimited operations of the great Creator—how should such considerations humble the pride of the most exalted creatures of this world, and prostrate them in humble adoration of that uncreated Being, from whom the Universe proceeds, and by whom, it has ever been and ever will be governed, from and to all eternity.

Religion and Morality are meant by God and Nature, like man and wife, to aid each other; and what God and Nature have joined, let not man attempt to separate: Religion without Morality is detestable hypocrisy; Morality without Religion is delusive and unstable—it is an house built on a sandy foundation; a ship without an anchor, a

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vessel

vessel without rudder or ballast, which may fail with seeming security, with a fair wind, in a pacific ocean, but will inevitably founder, when passions and temptations, the storms and tempests of the mind and the world assail it.

That faith which is not productive of good works, is a tree that brings not forth any fruit; and is only fit to be cut down and cast into the fire.

The avowed desideratum of Philosophy, is truth; a most desirable acquisition: possibly in this life, there may be no end of the pursuit—the danger is, we may be carried out of the road, and by following a phantom, miss the reality: a man of good common sense, and unbiaſſed understanding, has a better

ter chance, in the language of hunters, to be *in at the death*, than the keener speculative sportsman—they are very apt to give their tongues on a wrong scent, and must often back the foil, to recover the right quest—

———*Dat inania Verba*

Dat sine Mente sonum. Æ. 10. 639.

None can be forced to give their assent to Revelation, further than they can, by fair and impartial reasoning, if they are capable of reasoning on fair and impartial grounds, satisfy their own minds—Be it so: and let us charitably hope and presume, God Almighty, in his great Wisdom and Mercy, may make all due allowances, when such want of belief, is not made subservient

to corrupt affections—Granting this, let them be as liberal in return, and not brand with folly and superstition our more settled opinions—wrapt up in *superior knowledge* and *virtue*, they cannot, by making converts, add to *their own* happiness; they may impair and lessen ours, who do not pretend to such profound wisdom, and such *disinterested* virtue, but ground our hopes and expectations on humbler pretensions.

It is objected to believers in Revelation, that they are *so* on *interested principles*; let us acknowledge and glory in the fact; and think it our duty to be incited by the motives our Creator has graciously pointed out: but we take the liberty of saying, they are not the Interests or the Emoluments of this World,

World, that influence us, as we do not *in general* find them the *present* and *immediate* reward of that Virtue and Religion we firmly believe will procure us happiness hereafter—we are blind then to our own *superior* interest, not to pursue it, and hypocrites not to confess our aim.

Enthusiasm in Religion to a certain degree, is not to be so entirely reprobated, as we usually hear it; it is freely admitted in every other transaction of life, and little is ever *well* done, without a certain proportion of it—Poets, Painters, Musicians and Artists of every kind, feel and confess its useful influence—Why then should we totally banish it, where the object is of so much higher importance than any worldly pursuit?

purfuit? There may be some difficulty in afcertaining the boundary, and danger of tranfgreffing it; but good fenfe will keep it within its proper limits—some apology may perhaps be even made for a little fuperftition—it feldom enters into a very depraved mind, unlefs incited by fear, and then it may be of fervice.

Mr. Addifon is accused of ufing an argument in favor of Chriftianity below the dignity of a Philofopher, when he intimates, that a Belief in Revelation is the *fafe* fide of the queftion, as *fhould it not be true*, no harm can refult from it; and *fhould it be true*, much good—let us ask thofe cavillers one queftion—Should not all act in this manner in every circumftance of life? Does not
common

common prudence advise them to take the *safer side*, if they know it, on every occasion? Are the petty interests of this world of so much more consequence than those of the next?—I am engaged in a pursuit to acquire a fortune—two modes are suggested; in the one, it is possible I *may* succeed, but the hazard is great; the Vessel in which my property is, *uninsured*, may be taken by the enemy or lost in the voyage, and I may be so circumstanced, that should either of these events happen, my *whole capital* being on board, I have no resource; in the other I run no material risk, the trade being of such a nature, that though I even *do not* arrive at the *full extent* of my wishes and *well-grounded* expectations, I cannot be totally ruined, and am but just *where* I was before; but if

I *do* gain what I have every *good reason* to expect, I gain the utmost object of my ambition. Will a man of common sense be undetermined which to imbark in—thus the children of this world are wiser in their generations, than the children of light.

Young people should never in the outset of life, raise their expectations of making great fortunes—it is a thousand to one they do *not* succeed, and the failure may occasion chagrin and discontent—the very attempt is often ruinous: a moderate fortune acquired by degrees, is generally productive of more real happiness and true satisfaction: the necessaries, and even many of the superfluities of life, lie within a narrow compass, and they are ever the happiest,

happiest, who enjoy the former, and are contented with the fewest of the latter—" Give me neither Poverty nor Riches," was a prayer dictated by consummate wisdom.

The abuses that have disgraced Christianity, and have been made an objection to it, are beautifully illustrated by the Parable of the Tares that sprang up along with the good seed—neither the soil nor the husbandman were to blame—it was the enemy, that is, the vices and depravity of the world that sowed and cherrished them.

None ever despise learning and arraign the venerable seats where it is cultivated, who have made a proper use of the advantages they would have
afforded,

afforded, had they availed themselves of them.

It has been well suggested, that as our bodies refined and glorified, are to make a part of our nature in a future state; that there must be some wise reason for this in the Divine œconomy—we may humbly conjecture, though not positively assert, that the body, however changed and exalted, will have some functions to perform, to which mere spirit is not so competent; some employment; some degree of gratification may therefore be presumed to result from this re-union.

The man whose sense of honesty will carry him *no further* than the law obliges him, is, perhaps, a greater knave than
the

the highwayman, who robs in open defiance of the law—How many unjust and cruel actions may the one commit with impunity! Whereas the other runs a continual risk of being shot or hanged.

Very few, comparatively speaking, have such an accurate knowledge of the languages in which the holy Scriptures have come down to us, or of the early writers on them, as to determine precisely on the meaning of many passages and expressions—since then the great mass of mankind must rely on the skill and sagacity of others, whose education and abilities have given them a decided critical superiority, and on whom they must, in many points, confide, if they act wisely (and such confidence would be deemed wisdom in every other concern)

cern) they must conform to the opinions of the most learned and the most virtuous, who have undertaken to explain them; and of *such* clearly are the supporters and the defenders of the doctrines and the tenets of the Church of England, as by law established in this favored country.

Cicero in his admirable Treatise on old Age (ad fin.) makes Cato say, "*Quod si in hoc erro, quod animos hominum immortales esse credam, lubenter erro, nec mihi hunc errorem, quo dilector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo—Sin mortuus, ut quidam minuti Philosophi censent, nihil sentiam, non vereor, ne hunc errorem meum, mortui Philosophi irrideant.*"—How fairly may Christians apply this beautiful passage to the minute Philosophers of the present

present day! They may laugh at our Religion and call it fanaticism; be it so; they wont at all events, have a *long time* to laugh at us; and we should pray, that their present ridicule may not ever occasion to them a different sensation.

CONCLUSION.

TO a mind very little disposed to serious reflections, many thoughts on subjects similar to the preceding ones, naturally present themselves—the few observations here detailed, may suffice as an incitement to a more intimate discussion of some of the important truths all are so much concerned in—a pursuit that will inevitably be attended with
many

many advantages, and with pleasure so far exceeding the common amusements of the world, that instead of satiety and fatigue, a more intimate investigation, will add fresh spirit and animation to the entertainment.

The same thought may have more than once suggested itself, and in the compass of these few sheets, have been repeated, though not in the same words, and has only to plead in excuse, that where the object is deemed highly interesting, it is not easy to quit it, in the hope of its making, by repetition, a deeper impression; and could the writer, who has *no other motives*, flatter himself, that by any thing thrown out, he may have been, in the least degree, instrumental in propagating important truths,
and

and thereby advancing among young people, their first and best interests, namely those of Religion and Morality, it would be the consolatory and animating reflection of his departing spirit.

The writer of the Paper P. 99, and of that, P. 53, is better satisfied with opinions formed long ago, with much humble diffidence, on so mysterious and awful a subject, from having since met with somewhat similar sentiments in an elegant little work, judiciously selected from the French of *Monf. C. L. de Villette*, entitled, “ an Essay on the Happiness of the Life to come,” printed at Bath, and well worth the attention of young people.—A Lady of great ingenuity and merit is supposed to have adapted it to our language.

Since

Since these Sheets were worked off, an ingenious explanation of the passage alluded to from St. Matthew, has been met with in Mr. Bryant's excellent little Treatise "on the Authenticity of the Scriptures."—P. 221. Ed. 2d.—There is great probability that the prediction bore an *immediate* relation to the destruction of Jerusalem which was so soon to follow; but may it not also have a *further* reference to the subsequent events, for such two-fold meanings we frequently find in the prophetic language of Scripture—But in neither case can the infidel avail himself of the consequences that have ensued from the depravity of mankind, who are wisely left to the operation of their own free-will: either the one, or both the interpretations, equally evince the prescience and divinity of our Saviour.

^r Vid. Page 127.

FINIS.

